

LETTER LXXXIX

TO THE QUEEN

CONCERNING  
SUPPRESSING THE  
PROPHECIES, AND  
RESTRAINING THE  
NUMBER OF  
PREACHERS

EDMUND GRINDAL

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**To The Queen**

**Concerning Suppressing  
the Prophecies, and  
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Preachers**

**Edmund Grindal**

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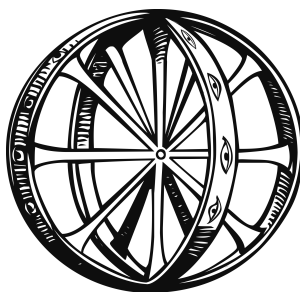
‘Letter LXXXIX - To The Queen, Concerning Suppressing the Prophecies, and Restraining  
the Number of Preachers,’ transcribed from *The Remains of Edmund Grindal, D. D.*, William  
Nicholson, ed. The Parker Society. (Cambridge: University Press, 1843), pp. 376–390.

English titling set in Cristoforo, by Thomas Phinney.

English body copy set in Monotype Centaur 12/16

Version 0.8.1

Oxford: Quadriga, 2021



Dec. 20, 1576.

WITH most humble remembrance of my bounden duty to your Majesty: It may please the same to be advertised, that the speeches which it hath pleased you to deliver unto me, when I last attended on your Highness, concerning abridging the number of preachers, and the utter suppression of all learned exercises and conferences among the ministers of the church, allowed by their bishops and ordinaries, have exceedingly dismayed and discomfited me. Not so much for that the said speeches sounded very hardly against mine own person, being but one particular man, and not much to be accounted of; but most of all for that the same might both tend to the public harm of God's church, whereof your Highness ought to be *nutricia*, and also to the heavy burdening shall be thy of your own conscience before God, if they should be put in strict execution. It was not your Majesty's pleasure then, the time not serving thereto, to hear me at any length concerning the said two matters then propounded: I thought it therefore my duty by writing to declare some part of my mind unto your Highness; beseeching the same with patience to read over this that I now send, written with mine own rude scribbling hand; which seemeth to be of more length than it is indeed: for I say with Ambrose, *Scribo manu mea, quod sola legas*.<sup>1</sup>

MADAM,

First of all, I must and will, during my life, confess, that there is no earthly creature to whom I am so much bounden as to your Majesty; who, notwithstanding mine insufficiency, (which commendeth your grace the more,) hath bestowed upon me so many and so great benefits as I could

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<sup>1</sup> I write with mine own hand, for you alone to read it.

never hope for, much less deserve. I do therefore, according to my most bounden duty, with all thanksgiving, bear towards your Majesty a most humble, faithful, and thankful heart; and that knoweth He which knoweth all things. Neither do I ever intend to offend your Majesty in any thing, unless, in the cause of God or of his church, by necessity of office, and burden of conscience, I shall thereunto be enforced: and in those cases, (which I trust in God shall never be urged upon me,) if I should use dissembling or flattering silence, I should very evil requite your Majesty's so many and so great benefits; for in so doing, both you might fall into peril towards God, and I myself into endless damnation.

The prophet Ezechiel termeth us, ministers of the church, *speculatores* and not *adulatores*.<sup>2</sup> If we see the sword coming by reason of any offence towards God, we must of necessity give warning, or else the blood of those that perish will be required at our hands. I beseech your Majesty thus to think of me, that I do not conceive any evil opinion of you, although I cannot assent to those two articles then propounded. I do with the rest of all your good subjects acknowledge, that we have received by your government many and most excellent benefits, as, among others, freedom of conscience, suppressing of idolatry, sincere preaching of the gospel, with public peace and tranquillity. I am also persuaded, that even in these matters, which you seem now to urge, your zeal and meaning is to the best. The like hath happened to many of the best princes that ever were: yet have they not refused afterwards to be better informed out of God's word. King David, so much commended in the scriptures, had no evil meaning, when he commanded the people to be numbered: he thought it good policy in so doing, to understand what forces he had in store to employ against God's enemies, if occasion so required. Yet

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<sup>2</sup> Watchmen, not flatterers (Ezek 33).

afterward, (saith the scripture,) his own heart stroke him; and God, by the prophet Gad, reprehended him for his offence, and gave him for the same choice of three very hard penances, that is to say, famine, war, and pestilence. Good king Ezechias, of courtesy and good affection, shewed to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon the treasures of the house of God and of his own house; and yet the prophet Esay told him, that God was therewith displeased. The godly king Jehoshaphat, for making league with his neighbour king Achab, (of like good meaning, no doubt) was likewise reprehended by Jehu the prophet in this form of words: *Impio præbes auxilium, et his qui oderunt Dominum amicitia jungeris, &c.*<sup>3</sup> Ambrose, writing to Theodosius the emperor, useth these words: *Novi pietatem tuam erga Deum, lenitatem in homines; obligatus sum beneficiis tuis.*<sup>4</sup> And yet, for all that, the same Ambrose doth not forbear in the same epistle earnestly to persuade the said emperor to revoke an ungodly edict, wherein he had commanded a godly bishop to re-edify a Jewish synagogue, pulled down by the Christian people.

And so, to come to the present case; I may very well use unto your Highness the words of Ambrose above written, *Novi pietatem tuam, &c.* But surely I cannot marvel enough, how this strange opinion should once enter into your mind, that it should be good for the church to have few preachers.

Alas, Madam! is the scripture more plain in any one thing, than that the gospel of Christ should be plentifully preached; and that plenty of labourers should be sent into the Lord's harvest; which, being great and large, standeth in need, not of a few, but many workmen?

There was appointed to the building of Salomon's material temple an hundred and fifty thousand artificers and labourers, besides three thousand

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<sup>3</sup> Thou helpst the ungodly, and art joined in friendship with those who hate the Lord (2 Chron 19).

<sup>4</sup> I know thy piety towards God, thy kindness towards men; I am bounden by thy benefits, &c. (S. Ambrose, *Epist.* 29).

three hundred overseers: and shall we think that a few preachers may suffice to build and edify the spiritual temple of Christ, which is his church?

Christ, when he sendeth forth his apostles, saith unto them, *Ite, predicate evangelium omni creaturæ*.<sup>5</sup> But all God's creatures cannot be instructed in the gospel, unless all possible means be used, to have multitude of preachers and teachers to preach unto them.

*Sermo Christi inhabitet in vobis opulente*,<sup>6</sup> saith St Paul to the Colossians; and to Timothy, *Prædica sermonem, insta tempestive, intempestive, argue, increpa, exhortare*.<sup>7</sup> Which things cannot be done without often and much preaching.

To this agreeth the practice of Christ's apostles, *Qui constituebant per singulas ecclesias presbyteros*.<sup>8</sup> St Paul likewise, writing to Titus, writeth thus, *Hujus rei gratia reliqui te in Creta, ut quæ desunt pergas corrigere, et constituas oppidatim presbyteros*.<sup>9</sup> And afterwards describeth, how the said *presbyteri* were to be qualified; not such as we are sometimes compelled to admit by mere necessity, (unless we should leave a great number of churches utterly desolate,) but such indeed as were able to exhort *per sanam doctrinam, et contradicentes convincere*.<sup>10</sup> And in this place I beseech your Majesty to note one thing necessary to be noted; which is this, If the Holy Ghost prescribe expressly that preachers should be placed *oppidatim*,<sup>11</sup> how can it well be thought, that three or four preachers may suffice for a shire?

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<sup>5</sup> Go ye, preach the gospel to every creature (Mk 16:15).

<sup>6</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (Col 3).

<sup>7</sup> Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort (2 Tim 4).

<sup>8</sup> Who appointed elders in every church (Acts 14).

<sup>9</sup> For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou mayest go on to set in order what is wanting, and appoint elders throughout every town (Titus).

<sup>10</sup> By sound doctrine, and to convince gainsayers (Titus).

<sup>11</sup> In every town.

Public and continual preaching of God's word is the ordinary mean and instrument of the salvation of mankind. St Paul calleth it the *ministry of reconciliation* of man unto God. By preaching of God's word the glory of God is enlarged, faith is nourished, and charity increased. By it the ignorant is instructed, the negligent exhorted and incited, the stubborn rebuked, the weak conscience comforted, and to all those that sin of malicious wickedness the wrath of God is threatened. By preaching also due obedience to Christian princes and magistrates is planted in the hearts of subjects: for obedience proceedeth of conscience; conscience is grounded upon the word of God; the word of God worketh his effect by preaching. So as generally, where preaching wanteth, obedience faileth.

No prince ever had more lively experience hereof than your Majesty hath had in your time, and may have daily. If your Majesty come to the city of London never so often, London what gratulation, what joy, what concourse of people is there to be seen! Yea, what acclamations and prayers to God for your long life, and other manifest significations of inward and unfeigned love, joined with most humble hearty obedience, are there to be heard! Whereof cometh this, Madam, but of the continual preaching of God's word in that city, whereby that people hath been plentifully instructed in their duty towards God and your Majesty? On the contrary, what bred the rebellion in the north? Was it not papistry, and ignorance of God's word, through want of often preaching? And in the time of that rebellion, were not all men, of all states, that made profession of the gospel, most ready to offer their lives for your defence? insomuch that one poor parish in Yorkshire, which by continual preaching had been better instructed than the rest, (Halifax I mean,) was ready to bring three or four thousand able men into the field to serve you against the said rebels. How can your Majesty have a more lively trial and experience of the contrary effects of much preaching, and of little or no preaching? The one working most faithful obedience, and



the other most unnatural disobedience and rebellion.

But it is thought of some, that many are admitted to preach, and few be able to do it well. That unable preachers be removed is very requisite, if ability and sufficiency may be rightly weighed and judged: and therein I trust as much is, and shall be, done as can be; for both I, for mine own part, (let it be spoken without any ostentation,) am very careful in allowing such preachers only, as be able and sufficient to be preachers, both for their knowledge in the scriptures, and also for testimony of their good life and conversation. And besides that, I have given very great charge to the rest of my brethren, the bishops of this province, to do the like. We admit no man to the office, that either professeth papistry or puritanism. Generally, the graduates of the university are only admitted to be preachers, unless it be some few which have excellent gifts of knowledge in the scriptures, joined with good utterance and godly persuasion. I myself procured above forty learned preachers and graduates, within less than six years, to be placed within the diocese of York, besides those I found there; and there I have left them: the fruits of whose travail in preaching your Majesty is like to reap daily, by most assured, dutiful obedience of your subjects in those parts.

But. indeed, this age judgeth very hardly, and nothing indifferently of the ability of preachers of our time; judging few or none in their opinion to be able. Which hard judgment groweth upon divers evil dispositions of men. St Paul doth commend the preaching of Christ crucified, *absque eminentia sermonis*.<sup>12</sup> But in our time many have so delicate ears, that no preaching can satisfy them, unless it be sauced with much finess and exornation of speech: which the same apostle utterly condemneth, and giveth this reason, *Ne evacueter crux Christi*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Without excellency of speech (1 Cor 1).

<sup>13</sup> Lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect (1 Cor 1).

Some there be also, that are mislikers of the godly reformation in religion now established; wishing indeed that there were no preachers at all; and so by depraving the ministers impugn religion, *non aperto Marte, sed cuniculis*<sup>14</sup>; much like to the popish bishops in your father's time, who would have had the English translation of the Bible called in, as evil translated; and the new translating thereof to have been committed to themselves; which they never intended to perform.

A number there is, (and that is exceeding great,) whereof some are altogether worldly-minded, and only bent covetously to gather worldly goods and possessions; serving mammon, and not God. And another great sum have given over themselves to all carnal, vain, dissolute, and lascivious life, *voluptatis amatores, magis quam Dei: et qui semetipsos dederunt ad patrandum omnem immunditiam cum aviditate*.<sup>15</sup> And because the preaching of God's word, which to all Christian consciences is sweet and delectable, is to them, having *cauteriatas conscientias*,<sup>16</sup> bitter and grievous, (for, as St Ambrose saith, *Quomodo possunt verba Dei dulcia esse in faucibus tuis, in quibus est amaritudo nequitiae?*<sup>17</sup>) therefore they wish also that there were no preachers at all. But because they dare not directly condemn the office of preaching, so expressly commanded by God's word, (for that were open blasphemy,) they turn themselves altogether, and with the same meaning as the other do, to take exceptions against the persons of them that be admitted to preach.

But God forbid, Madam, that you should open your ears to any of these wicked persuasions, or any way go about to diminish the preaching of

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<sup>14</sup> Not by open opposition, but by secret undermining.

<sup>15</sup> Lovers of pleasure more than of God, and who have given themselves over to commit all uncleanness with greediness (2 Tim 3).

<sup>16</sup> Consciences seared.

<sup>17</sup> How can the word of God be sweet in thy mouth, in which is the bitterness of sin? (*Serm. 13 in Psalm 118*).

Christ's gospel: for that would ruinate all together at the length. *Quum defecerit prophetia, dissipabitur populus*,<sup>18</sup> saith Salomon.

Now, where it is thought, that the reading of the godly homilies, set forth by public authority, may suffice, I continue of the same mind I was when I attended last upon your Majesty. The reading of homilies hath his commodity; but is nothing comparable to the office of preaching. The godly preacher is termed in the gospel *fidelis servus et prudens, qui novit famulatio Domini cibum demensum dare in tempore*<sup>19</sup> who can apply his speech according to the diversity of times, places, and hearers, which cannot be done in homilies: exhortations, reprehensions, and persuasions, are uttered with more affection, to the moving of the hearers, in sermons than in homilies. Besides, homilies were devised by the godly bishops in your brother's time, only to supply necessity, for want of preachers; and are by the statute not to be preferred, but to give place to sermons, whensoever they may be had; and were never thought in themselves alone to contain sufficient instruction for the Church of England. For it was then found, as it is found now, that this Church of England hath been by appropriations, and that not without sacrilege, spoiled of the livings, which at the first were appointed to the office of preaching and teaching. Which appropriations were first annexed to abbeys; and after came to the crown; and now are dispersed to private men's possessions, without hope to reduce the same to the original institution. So as at this day, in mine opinion, where one church is able to yield sufficient living for a learned preacher, there are at the least seven churches unable to do the same: and in many parishes of your realm, where there be seven or eight hundred souls, (the more is the pity,) there are not eight pounds a year reserved for a

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<sup>18</sup> When prophecy shall fail, the people shall be scattered (Prov 29).

<sup>19</sup> A faithful and wise servant, who knoweth how to give his Lord's family their apportioned food in season (Matt 24).

minister. In such parishes it is not possible to place able preachers, for want of convenient stipend. If every flock might have a preaching pastor, which is rather to be wished than hoped for, then were reading of homilies altogether unnecessary. But to supply that want of preaching of God's word, which is the food of the soul, growing upon the necessities afore-mentioned, both in your brother's time, and in your time, certain godly homilies have been devised, that the people should not be altogether destitute of instruction: for it is an old and a true proverb, "better half a loaf than no bread."

Now for the second point, which is concerning the learned exercise and conference amongst the ministers of the church: I have consulted with divers of my brethren, the bishops, by letters; who think the same as I do, viz. a thing profitable to the church, and therefore expedient to be continued. And I trust your Majesty will think the like, when your Highness shall have been informed of the manner and order thereof; what authority it hath of the scriptures; what commodity it bringeth with it; and what incommodities will follow, if it be clean taken away.

The authors of this exercise are the bishops of the diocese where the same is used; who both by the law of God, and by the canons and constitutions of the church now in force, have authority to appoint exercises to their inferior ministers, for increase of learning and knowledge in the scriptures, as to them seemeth most expedient: for that pertaineth *ad disciplinam clericalem*.<sup>20</sup> The times appointed for the assembly is once a month, or once in twelve or fifteen days, at the discretion of the ordinary. The time of the exercise is two hours: the place, the church of the town appointed for the assembly. The matter entreated of is as followeth. Some text of scripture, before appointed to be spoken of, is interpreted in this order: First, the occasion of the place is shewed. Secondly, the end. Thirdly, the proper sense of the place. Fourthly,

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<sup>20</sup> To the discipline of ministers.

the propriety of the words: and those that be learned in the tongues shewing the diversities of interpretations. Fifthly, where the like phrases are used in the scriptures. Sixthly, places in the scriptures, seeming to repugn, are reconciled. Seventhly, the arguments of the text are opened. Eighthly, it is also declared, what virtues and what vices are there touched; and to which of the commandments they pertain. Ninthly, how the text hath been wrested by the adversaries, if occasion so require. Tenthly, and last of all, what doctrine of faith or manners the text doth contain. The conclusion is, with the prayer for your Majesty and all estates, as is appointed by the Book of Common Prayer, and a psalm.

These orders following are also observed in the said exercise. First, two or three of the gravest and best learned pastors are appointed of the bishop to moderate in every assembly. No man may speak, unless he be first allowed by the bishop, with this *proviso*, that no layman be suffered to speak at any time. No controversy of this present time and state shall be moved or dealt withal. If any attempt the contrary, he is put to silence by the moderator. None is suffered to glance openly or covertly at persons public or private; neither yet any one to confute another. If any man utter a wrong sense of the scripture, he is privately admonished thereof, and better instructed by the moderators, and other his fellow-ministers. If any man use immodest speech, or irreverent gesture or behaviour, or otherwise be suspected in life, he is likewise admonished, as before. If any wilfully do break these orders, he is presented to the bishop, to be by him corrected.

The ground of this, or like exercise, is of great and ancient authority. For Samuel did practise such like exercises in his time, both at Naioth in Ramatha, and at Bethel. So did Elizæus the prophet, at Jericho. Which

studious persons in those days were called *filii prophetarum*,<sup>21</sup> that is to say, the disciples of the prophets, that being exercised in the study and knowledge of the scriptures, they might be able men to serve in God's church, as that time required. St Paul also doth make express mention, that the like in effect was used in the primitive church; and giveth rules for the order of the same; as namely, that two or three should speak, and the rest should keep silence.

That exercise of the church in those days St Paul calleth *prophetiam*, and the speakers *prophetas*: terms very odious in our days to some, because they are not rightly understood. For indeed *prophetia*, in that and like places of St Paul, doth not, as it doth sometimes, signify prediction of things to come, which gift is not now ordinary in the church of God; but signifieth there, by the consent of the best ancient writers, the interpretation and exposition of the scriptures. And therefore doth St Paul attribute unto those that be called *prophetæ* in that chapter, *doctrinam ad ædificationem, exhortationem, et consolationem*.<sup>22</sup>

This gift of expounding and interpreting the scriptures was, in St Paul's time, given to many by special miracle, without study: so was also, by like miracle, the gift to speak with strange tongues, which they had never learned. But now, miracles ceasing, men must attain to the knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, &c. by travail and study, God giving the increase. So must men also attain by like means to the gift of expounding and interpreting the scriptures. And amongst other helps, nothing is so necessary as these above named exercises and conferences amongst the ministers of the church: which in effect are all one with the exercises of students in divinity in the universities; saving that the first is done in a tongue understood, to the more edifying of the unlearned hearers.

Howsoever report hath been made to your Majesty concerning these exercises, yet I and others of your bishops, whose names are noted in the

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<sup>21</sup> The sons of the prophets.

<sup>22</sup> Teaching unto edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor 14).

margin hereof,<sup>23</sup> as they have testified unto me by their letters, having found by experience, that these profits and commodities following have ensued of them: 1. The ministers of the church are more skilful and ready in the scriptures, and apter to teach their flocks. 2. It withdraweth them from idleness, wandering, gaming, &c. 3. Some, afore suspected in doctrine, are brought hereby to open confession of the truth. 4. Ignorant ministers are driven to study, if not for conscience, yet for shame and fear of discipline. 5. The opinion of laymen, touching the idleness of the clergy, is hereby removed. 6. Nothing by experience beateth down popery more than that ministers (as some of my brethren do certify) grow to such good knowledge, by means of these exercises, that where afore were not three able preachers, now are thirty, meet to preach at St Paul's Cross; and forty or fifty besides, able to instruct their own cures. So as it is found by experience the best means to increase knowledge in the simple, and to continue it in the learned. Only backward men in religion, and contemnners of learning in the countries abroad, do fret against it; which in truth doth the more commend it. The dissolution of it would breed triumph to the adversaries, and great sorrow and grief unto the favourers of religion; contrary to the counsel of Ezekiel, who saith, *Cor justī non est contristandum*.<sup>24</sup> And although some few have abused this good and necessary exercise, there is no reason that the malice of a few should prejudice all. Abuses may be reformed, and that which is good may remain. Neither is there any just cause of offence to be taken, if divers men make divers senses of one sentence of scripture; so that all the senses be good and agreeable to the analogy and proportion of faith: for otherwise we must needs condemn all the ancient fathers and doctors of the church, who

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<sup>23</sup> Here in the margin are indicated the sees of Canterbury, London, Winchester, Bath, Lichfield, Gloucester, Lincoln, Chichester, Exeter, and St Davids.

<sup>24</sup> The heart of the righteous must not be made sad (Ezek 18:18).

most commonly expound one and the same text of the scripture diversely, and yet all to the good of the church. Therefore doth St Basil compare the scriptures to a well; out of the which the more a man draweth, the better and sweeter is the water.

I trust, when your Majesty hath considered and well weighed the premises, you will rest satisfied, and judge that no such inconveniences can grow of these exercises, as you have been informed, but rather the clean contrary. And for my own part, because I am very well assured, both by reasons and arguments taken out of the holy scriptures, and by experience, (the most certain seal of sure knowledge,) that the said exercises, for the interpretation and exposition of the scriptures, and for exhortation and comfort drawn out of the same, are both profitable to increase knowledge among the ministers, and tendeth to the edifying of the hearers,—I am forced, with all humility, and yet plainly, to profess, that I cannot with safe conscience, and without the offence of the majesty of God, give my assent to the suppressing of the said exercises: much less can I send out any injunction for the utter and universal subversion of the same. I say with St Paul, “I have no power to destroy, but to only edify”<sup>25</sup>; and with the same apostle, “I can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.”<sup>26</sup>

If it be your Majesty’s pleasure, for this or any other cause, to remove me out of this place, I will with all humility yield thereunto, and render again to your Majesty that I received of the same. I consider with myself, *Quod horrendum est incidere in manus Dei viventis*.<sup>27</sup> I consider also, *Quod qui facit contra conscientiam (divinis juribus nixam) ædificat ad gehennam*.<sup>28</sup> “And what should I win

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<sup>25</sup> 2 Cor 10.

<sup>26</sup> 2 Cor 13.

<sup>27</sup> That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10).

<sup>28</sup> That he who acts against his conscience, (resting upon the laws of God), builds for hell (Cyprian).



if I gained” (I will not say a bishoprick, but) “the whole world, and lose mine own soul!”<sup>29</sup>

Bear with me, I beseech you, Madam, if I choose rather to offend your earthly majesty, than to offend the heavenly majesty of God. And now being sorry, that I have been so long and tedious to your Majesty, I will draw to an end, most humbly praying the same well to consider these two short petitions following.

The first is, that you would refer all these ecclesiastical matters which touch religion, or the doctrine and discipline of the church, unto the bishops and divines of your realm; according to the example of all godly Christian emperors and princes of all ages. For indeed they are things to be judged, (as an ancient father writeth,) *in ecclesia, seu synodo, non in palatio*.<sup>30</sup> When your Majesty hath questions of the laws of your realm, you do not decide the same in your court, but send them to your judges to be determined. Likewise for doubts in matters of doctrine or discipline of the church, the ordinary way is to refer the decision of the same to the bishops, and other head ministers of the church.

Ambrose to Theodosius useth these words: *Si de causis pecuniariis comites tuos consulis, quanta magis in causa religionis sacerdotes Domini est consulas?*<sup>31</sup> And likewise the same father to the good emperor Valentinianus : *Si conferendum de fide, sacerdotum debet esse ista collatio; sicut factum est sub Constantino augustæ memoriæ principe, qui nullas leges ante præmisit, sed liberum dedit iudicium sacerdotibus*.<sup>32</sup> And the same

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<sup>29</sup> Matt 26.

<sup>30</sup> In the church, or a synod, not in a palace.

<sup>31</sup> If in pecuniary matters you consult with your earls, how much more is it fit that you consult with the Lord's priests in the cause of religion? (*Ad Theodosium*, Ep. 29).

<sup>32</sup> If we confer about faith, the conference ought to be left to the priests; as it was done under Constantine, a prince of most honourable memory; who set forth no laws, before he had left them to the free judgment of the priests. (Ep. 32).

father saith, that Constantius the emperor, son to the said Constantine the Great, began well, by reason he followed his fathers steps at the first; but ended ill, because he took upon him *de fide intrapalatium judicare*<sup>33</sup> (for so be the words of Ambrose,) and thereby fell into Arianism; a terrible example!

The said Ambrose, so much commended in all histories for a godly bishop, goeth yet farther, and writeth to the same emperor in this form: *Si docendus est episcopus a laico, quid sequetur? Laicus ergo disputet, et episcopus audiat; episcopus discat a laico. At certe, si vel scripturarum seriem divinarum vel vetera tempora retractemus, quis est qui abnuat, in causa fidei, in causa, inquam, fidei, episcopos solere de imperatoribus Christianis, non imperatores de episcopis judicare?*<sup>34</sup> Would God your Majesty would follow this ordinary course! You should procure to yourself much more quietness of mind, better please God, avoid many offences, and the church should be more quietly and peaceably governed, much to your comfort, and commodity of your realm.

The second petition I have to make to your Majesty is this: that, when you deal in matters of faith and religion, or matters that touch the church of Christ, which is his spouse, bought with so dear a price, you would not use to pronounce so resolutely and peremptorily, *quasi ex auctoritate*, as ye may do in civil and extern matters; but always remember, that in God's causes the will of God, and not the will of any earthly creature, is to take place. It is the antichristian voice of the pope, *Sic volo, sic jubeo ; stet pro ratione voluntas*.<sup>35</sup> In

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<sup>33</sup> To judge of faith within the palace (Ep. 32).

<sup>34</sup> If a bishop be to be taught by a layman, what will follow? Let the layman then dispute, and the bishop hear: let the bishop learn of the layman. But certainly, if we have recourse either to the order of the holy scriptures or to ancient times, who is there that can deny, that in the cause of faith, I say, in the cause of faith, bishops were wont to judge concerning Christian emperors, not emperors of bishops? (Ep. 32).

<sup>35</sup> So I will have it; so I command: let my will stand for a reason (Juv., *Satyricon* 6.223).

God's matters all princes ought to bow their sceptres to the Son of God, and to ask counsel at his mouth, what they ought to do. David exhorteth all kings and rulers to *serve God with fear and trembling*.<sup>36</sup>

Remember, Madam, that you are a mortal creature. "Look not only (as was said to Theodosius) upon the purple and princely array, wherewith ye are apparelled; but consider withal, what is that that is covered therewith. Is it not flesh and blood? Is it not dust and ashes? Is it not a corruptible body, which must return to his earth again, God knoweth how soon?"<sup>37</sup> Must not you also one day appear *ante tremendum tribunal Crucifixi, ut recipias ibi, prout gesseris in corpore, sive bonum sive malum?*<sup>38</sup>

And although ye are a mighty prince, yet remember that He which dwelleth in heaven is mightier. He is, as the Psalmist sayeth, *terribilis, et is qui aufert spiritum principum, terribilis super omnes reges terræ*.<sup>39</sup>

Wherefore I do beseech you, Madam, *in visceribus Christi*,<sup>40</sup> when you deal in these religious causes, set the majesty of God before your eyes, laying all earthly majesty aside: determine with yourself to obey his voice, and with all humility say unto him, *Non mea, sed tua voluntas fiat*.<sup>41</sup> God hath blessed you with great felicity in your reign, now many years; beware you do not impute the same to your own deserts or policy, but give God the glory. And as to instruments and means, impute your said felicity, first, to the goodness of the cause which ye have set forth, (I mean Christ's true religion;) and,

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<sup>36</sup> Ps 2.

<sup>37</sup> Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.* 5.100.18.

<sup>38</sup> Before the fearful judgment-seat of the Crucified, to receive there according as you have done in the body, whether it be good or evil? (2 Cor 5).

<sup>39</sup> Terrible, and he who taketh away the spirit of princes, and is terrible above all the kings of the earth (Ps 76).

<sup>40</sup> In the bowels of Christ [cf. Phil 1:8, 2 Cor 10—ed.].

<sup>41</sup> Not mine, but thy will be done [cf. Luke 22:42—ed.].

secondly, to the sighs and groanings of the godly in their fervent prayer to God for you; which have hitherto, as it were, tied and bound the hands of God, that he could not pour out his plagues upon you and your people, most justly deserved.

Take heed, that ye never once think of declining from God, lest that be verified of you, which is written of Ozeas, [Joash,] who continued a prince of good and godly government for many years together; and afterwards, *cum roboratus esset*, (saith the text,) *elevatum est cor ejus in interitum suum, et neglexit Dominum*.<sup>42</sup> Ye have done many things well; but except ye persevere to the end, ye cannot be blessed. For if ye turn from God, away his merciful countenance from you. And what remaineth then to be looked for, but only a terrible expectation of God's judgments, and an heaping up of wrath against the day of wrath?

But I trust in God, your Majesty will always humble yourself under his mighty hand, and go forward in the zealous setting forth of God's true religion, always yielding due obedience and reverence to the word of God, the only rule of faith and religion. And if ye so do, although God hath just cause many ways to be angry with you and us for our unfaithfulness, yet I doubt nothing, but that for his own name's sake, and for his own glory's sake, he will still hold his merciful hand over us, shield and protect us under the shadow of his wings, as he hath done hitherto.

I beseech God, our heavenly Father, plentifully to pour his principal Spirit upon you, and always to direct your heart in his holy fear. Amen.

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<sup>42</sup> When he was strengthened, his heart was lifted up to his destruction, and he regarded not the Lord (2 Chron 24).